

anticipating what will be the feeling of the Legislature—that we are expressing the wishes of the people of the State, jealous of her credit, and regardless of all minor considerations when the question is whether that credit shall be maintained.

The subject of Education has been frequently and cogently addressed to Legislative attention, in the annual communications of the Executive, but we desire again to bring it particularly to your notice. The general diffusion of Education among the people is necessary to the safety of our liberties and the stability of our Republican institutions, and consequently demands at your hands zealous and fostering efforts to accomplish it. When the people know their rights they will maintain them. When they know their duties they will discharge them. When they become acquainted with the principles and structure of their Government; its adaptation to their wants and to the security of their liberties, they will appreciate their privileges, and act the part of good citizens to deserve and maintain them. That government which is based upon abstract principles of Republican liberty, if it be not cemented by the education of the people, must be instable and of uncertain continuance. The arts of the demagogue and the machinations of ambitious and corrupt rulers may triumph over ignorance, but will always meet the rebuke and defeat of an enlightened community. It was the profound remark of a wise philosopher who asserted “knowledge to be power,” and its power is never more manifest or more usefully employed than in curbing the stretches of tyranny and foiling the unhallowed designs of restless and ambitious aspirants for that fame which rests upon the ruins of their country.

The increased means of the State, arising from the Surplus Revenue of the United States deposited in our Treasury, afford the means of extending the invaluable blessings of general Education, which should not be omitted to be effectively employed by the Legislative guardians of the public weal for that purpose.

Our present common school system is very imperfect and, it is believed, in many respects radically defective; and we recommend its thorough revision and the adoption of such modifications and extensions as may serve to remedy and perfect it.

Permit us to invoke your attention to the propriety of passing such laws as may be necessary to prevent a growing abuse of the elective franchise, which has become so serious as to require Legislative interposition and correction. Every citizen who possesses the requisite qualifications is entitled to the uninterrupted exercise of the right of suffrage. Nothing should be done to limit or embarrass it. The genius of our free institutions has placed every citizen upon a level, and invested each with a voice in the administration of public affairs. But in proportion as this right is precious ought we to guard against its abuse. The existing Laws are not adequate to prevent illegal voting. There is too much basis for the complaint that the elective franchise, particularly in our large commercial emporium, has been